Court was filed on 5th December, 1996, indicating that it would be difficult to bring in a uniform legislation applicable to all religious denominations unless there is a social acceptability to the same. It was further indicated in the said affidavit that it would be advisable and practicable to progressively move in that direction securing uniformity slowly and steadily in consonance with the social acceptability for a uniform civil code. The question of implementing directive principles for evolving a uniform civil code also necessarily involves changes in personal laws of various communities. The policy of the Government is normally not to effect any change in the personal laws unless the initiative therefor comes from the community concerned. However, reforms in the personal laws have been undertaken from time to time on initiative of the concerned community. The Government has recently taken steps in this direction by enacting and enforcing the Indian Divorce (Amendment) Act, 2001, and by introducing the Indian Succession (Amendment) Bill, 2001.

Rakesh Mohan Committee Report on Tonnage Tax Scheme

4903. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have examined the Rakesh Mohan Committee Report on tonnage tax scheme for shipping companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Committee has specified the areas that would get a boost under the scheme; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir. The report has been examined and accepted by Ministry of Shipping.

(b) to (d) The Committee has recommended that, recognizing the role of shipping in the national economy, a conducive fiscal regime should be provided so that Indian shipping can be internationally competitive. To facilitate this, Indian Shipping companies may be given an option to opt for Tonnage Tax System to be introduced with effect from the financial year 2002-2003. While, this step should substantially help to check stagnation in the growth of Indian shipping tonnage, the option to continue to remain within the Corporate Tax regime may also be provided so that those companies which prefer to be under

that regime, can do so. This, coupled with the rationalization of the tax regimes for Indian seafarers, would to a large extent help rejuvenate the Indian Shipping Industry.

Conversion of Vizag into Transhipment Centre

4904. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) wheather Vizag is being converted into a transhipment centre;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Keeping in view the totality of the factors, especially potential for traffic for transhipment and geographical location *vis-a-vis* international shipping routes, development of Visakhapatnam port into a Transhipment Centre is not considered viable.

Use of Fuel on Operation of Waterways Traffic

†4905. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the use of fuel on operation of waterways traffic is less as compared to that of rail and road traffic;

(b) if so, the average consumption of fuel on operation of waterways, rail and road traffic, separately;

(c) whether the operation of waterways traffic is less as compared to that of rail and surface traffic due to the decrease in the use of fuel; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.